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Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth Session
Supplement No. 34 (A/59/34)

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Note

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Mission statement

As the only independent external oversight body of the United Nations system mandated to conduct evaluations, inspections and investigations systemwide, the Joint Inspection Unit aims:

(a) To assist the legislative organs of the participating organizations in meeting their governance responsibilities in respect of their oversight function concerning management of human, financial and other resources by the secretariats;

(b) To help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the respective secretariats in achieving the legislative mandates and the mission objectives established for the organizations;

(c) To promote greater coordination between the organizations of the United Nations system;

(d) To identify best practices, propose benchmarks and facilitate information-sharing throughout the system.

Preface by the Chairman

I am pleased to submit, in accordance with article 10, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the annual report covering the period 1 January to 31 December 2003.

The past year saw some significant events for the Joint Inspection Unit. A process of reform was started, as described below. Among the many new features contained in this initiative is the redesign of the annual report to make it more substantive and informative than in the past. This process will continue in the future, and we intend to merge our annual report and our report on the Joint Inspection Unit programme of work into a single report beginning next year. This will be done as both a cost-saving measure and a way of reducing the number of reports that need to be considered by the General Assembly and the legislative organs of our participating organizations.

Included in the present report is a summary of the seven reports that the Unit completed last year. As a consequence of the efforts put into the reform, some reports scheduled for completion by December 2003 will be completed only in the first half of 2004. All of these are systemwide in scope. Among these are reports on procurement practices, results-based management and human resources management within the United Nations system, a report on headquarters agreements and one on standards of accommodation and travel time.

The present report also contains information on the expected impact of selected reports that were reviewed by various legislative organs of participating organizations in 2003. We believe that this will give the Member States a better overview of the usefulness of the work of the Joint Inspection Unit. The Unit, within the context of its continued reform efforts, is in the process of designing a methodology to include baseline data in its reports so that in the future it will be able to report more on the impact of its recommendations rather than on the state of review of its reports. While the full impact of this effort will be felt in the reports that will be included in the 2005 programme of work, it is already having an effect on reports currently under preparation.

Among other events of importance for the Joint Inspection Unit last year, I would like to highlight that it finalized the recruitment of a new Executive Secretary and that the World Tourism Organization accepted its statute, thus joining the other participating organizations that had done so previously, and we began work on a new, more comprehensive web site for the Unit.

Ion **Gorita**
Chairman

Geneva, May 2004

Chapter I

Reform of the Joint Inspection Unit

1. During 2003, the Joint Inspection Unit began a comprehensive process of review aimed at identifying impediments to the effective discharge of its functions and designing possible solutions to overcome these hindrances. This review stemmed from the conclusion reached by the Unit that if it was to fulfil its mandate and meet the needs of Member States more effectively, further improvements needed to be brought to its functioning as well as to the quality and impact of its activities. At its forty-third session, in July 2003, the Committee for Programme and Coordination also recommended that the Unit undertake an in-depth review of its statute, working methods and proceedings and present to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session concrete proposals on how best the actual weaknesses could be addressed.

2. The Unit decided, therefore, to present a preliminary review to the General Assembly during the main part of its fifty-eighth session and issued a report on its preliminary review of its statute and working methods.[1] That preliminary report examined such issues as the composition of the Unit and the appointment of inspectors, functions and responsibilities of the Unit, its mode of operation (and in particular the preparation of its programme of work) and the role of its Chairman. On all these issues, the Unit was guided by the common underlying conviction that changes must be made that would make its work more effective and more relevant and provide added value to the system.

3. A second report of the Joint Inspection Unit, on its in-depth review of its statute and working methods,[2] was also issued during the main part of the fifty-eighth session. It presented an in-depth analysis of the issues previously identified as the most problematic and possible ways to overcome these problems. In preparing that document, which included a number of suggestions for actions to be taken by the General Assembly, the Unit took into account the views expressed on the first report by Member States and representatives of the secretariats of participating organizations during subsequent consultations.

4. Those consultations brought to light the Unit's comparative advantages as the sole systemwide external oversight body. There was general agreement about the Unit's highly valuable potential, given its unique position, with its cumulative experience of agency operations, strategic perspective and knowledge of best practices, to provide not only evaluation and oversight but also management advice across the whole system. The role of the Unit in "cross-fertilization" among organizations of the United Nations system was also stressed.

5. Although both reports were discussed during the main part of the fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided to defer to the resumed part of its session further consideration of the item. Nevertheless, the Unit pursued its internal process of reflection and reform, with a view to advancing in those areas that did not require legislative approval or direction. To this effect, the Unit approved a strategic framework and tied to it a new methodology and new analytical instruments for the determination of its annual programme of work.

6. The objective of this initiative was to ensure that Joint Inspection Unit reports become more relevant to the agenda of the Member States and the participating organizations, that they stress better ways to deliver programmes and/or efficiency

gains and savings and that they fully take advantage of the Unit's comparative advantages by emphasizing themes that are systemwide in nature. Similarly, the Unit approved a set of internal working procedures designed to improve the quality and timeliness of the reports. This process will continue in 2004.

Chapter II
Reports issued in 2003

7. The Unit issued seven reports during 2003. Unlike reports issued in previous years, most were addressed to a single organization. Nevertheless, in all cases, the Unit relied on its systemwide expertise to draw recommendations based on best practices and suited to the specific needs and constraints of the organization concerned.

8. *JIU/REP/2003/1, review of management and administration in the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).* This report was the sixth in the series of comprehensive reviews of the administration and management of specialized agencies initiated by the Unit in 1999. Previous reviews of administration and management had dealt with the International Labour Organization (JIU/REP/1999/4), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (JIU/REP/2000/4), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (JIU/REP/2001/3), the World Health Organization (WHO) (JIU/REP/2001/5) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (JIU/REP/2002/8). The report includes 23 recommendations on issues relating to management structure and systems, planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, the financial situation of UNIDO, human resources management, field representation and internal and external oversight. It was initially discussed by Member States at the twenty-seventh session of the Industrial Development Board (IDB) in August 2003, followed in October 2003 by an informal briefing session, requested by members of IDB. The General Conference, at its tenth session, held in December 2003, requested the Director-General, in resolution GC.10/Res.10, to continue to consider the relevant recommendations in the report, specifically those referring to results-based management and budgeting, decentralization and UNIDO field presence, as well as the independence of the Comptroller General (head of internal oversight) and areas for further improvement. It is worth mentioning that the Director-General had implemented some of the recommendations related to human resources management even prior to the adoption of the aforementioned resolution. The implementation of other recommendations is under way.

9. *JIU/REP/2003/2, review of the United Nations budgetary process.* The Unit undertook this report to contribute to current efforts, by Member States and the Secretariat of the United Nations, to reform the budgetary process of the Organization. The report called for a more cost-efficient budgetary process (the cost for the biennium was assessed to exceed $20 million) and emphasized the need to review the various elements of the process to better reflect and serve the shift to results-based budgeting and management. Based, in part, on the experience and practice of other United Nations organizations that had overhauled their budgetary processes, the report presented a number of options that were considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, together with proposals by the Secretary-General, in its review of the planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation process of the United Nations. In its resolution 58/269 of 23 December 2003, on the strengthening of the United Nations, the General Assembly, while not referring specifically to the Joint Inspection Unit report, recommended several measures to reform the process consistent with the report's proposals. In particular, the request for a strategic framework to replace the four-

year medium-term plan, reflecting the long-term objectives of the Organization, recognizes the need for strategic planning as recommended by the Unit. In addition, the Assembly reaffirmed the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the process of monitoring and evaluation and asked for proposals on the strengthening and monitoring of programme performance and evaluation, to be submitted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, in collaboration with the Unit.

10. *JIU/REP/2003/3, from the Optical Disk System to the official document system (ODS): status of implementation and evaluation.* Fifteen years after recommending the development of the initial Optical Disk System, the Unit assessed the status of its implementation and identified remaining issues the treatment of which could contribute to the expansion of its use as an archival and retrieval system of official documents for the United Nations and other interested organizations. The report includes eight recommendations, four of which deal with policy matters, in particular proposals to authorize a new policy of free public access to the system, and four with management issues, such as clarification of responsibilities linked to the official document system, and ways to broaden awareness and use of the system. The report is among specific Joint Inspection Unit reports referred to the 2004 annual session of the Executive Board of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (14 to 23 June 2004, Geneva), and it is expected to be considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. Implementation of the recommendations contained in this report will result in greater access to United Nations documents at the global level.

11. *JIU/REP/2003/4, multilingualism and access to information: case study on the World Health Organization.* Further to its general report on the implementation of multilingualism in the United Nations system, issued in 2002,[3] the Unit prepared this specific case study on WHO, bearing in mind the provisions of article 2 of the WHO Constitution, mandating it, inter alia, "to provide information, counsel and assistance in the field of health" and "to assist in developing an informed public opinion among all peoples on matters of health". This report includes five recommendations related to policy and management matters, aimed at improving access for various target audiences to information made available by the Organization. The report is scheduled to be considered by the Executive Board of WHO early in 2005.

12. *JIU/REP/2003/5, achieving the universal primary education goal of the Millennium Declaration — new challenges for development cooperation.* The purpose of this systemwide report, which was issued under the sole responsibility of its author, was to examine whether at this time all the conditions are in place to allow Member States to attain the universal primary education goal stated in the Millennium Declaration. It examines the strategies and roles of the most prominent actors in the field of education represented in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The report makes 14 action-oriented recommendations for changes to be made to improve the situation, in areas such as data management, quality of education issues, evaluation and reporting to Member States and capacity-building. The recommendations are aimed at improving the efficiency of the strategies of the various United Nations system partners, advocate a further sharpening of their focus on the basis of the comparative advantages of the respective organizations and plead for better and increased coordination, cooperation and interaction, especially at the field level, to create additional

synergies. The recommendations, if implemented, could contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, increase the effectiveness of aid in the field of education and enhance ownership on the part of partner countries.

13. *JIU/REP/2003/6, management review of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*. This report was prepared at the request of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which asked the Unit to undertake a comprehensive review of the management and administration of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular with regard to their impact on the recruitment policies and the composition of the staff.[4] Accordingly, the report, which built on the findings of reviews and audits previously carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Office of the High Commissioner itself, includes 10 recommendations, 5 of which deal with such issues as management structures, executive direction and programme management and financial matters, while the other 5 are focused on human resources management, in particular the geographical distribution of staff. In preparing the report, the Unit also relied on the analysis of a questionnaire sent to staff members. Developed and administered electronically, the questionnaire yielded important information thanks to a very high rate of response. The report will be submitted to the Commission at its sixtieth session. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report will contribute to addressing the concerns expressed by Member States regarding the composition of the Office.

14. *JIU/REP/2003/7, evaluation of the United Nations Volunteers Programme*. The report was aimed at evaluating the administrative and management structure and methods of a programme whose activities, number of volunteers, network of partners, financial resources and staff have considerably increased in recent years in response to a changing and expanding mandate. The report includes 15 recommendations focused on such issues as geographic and gender representation among volunteers, partnerships with other organizations, governance, management and structure, programme and financial planning, programme monitoring and evaluation, as well as oversight. The report will be considered by the Executive Board of UNDP at its annual session in June 2004.

Chapter III
Follow-up system and implementation of recommendations

A. Implementation of the follow-up system

15. Steadfast efforts undertaken by the Unit in previous years to establish a follow-up system that would allow the systematic tracking of the status of implementation of its recommendations have begun to bear fruit.

16. The secretariat of WHO has issued for the second time a report on the implementation of earlier recommendations contained in reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, which was submitted to the one hundred and thirteenth session of the Executive Board of that organization.[5] Once again, the report includes comprehensive information on the specific unit responsible and the timetable for the implementation of the recommendations, as well as their expected impact.

17. In 2002, the FAO Council endorsed the enhanced system for reporting on the Unit's recommendations. To ensure that each recommendation receives consistent treatment, an agreed format is used to convey the Director-General's comments to the competent committees, avoiding general responses such as "taking note", and instead making explicit statements (e.g., that recommendations are relevant or not relevant, and are rejected, endorsed or modified). All recommendations endorsed (either by the Director-General or the committees) are included in an annual monitoring report, which is submitted to the competent committees covering the status of approved recommendations. Recommendations remain in the monitoring report until such time as the necessary implementation action has been taken. In 2003, to further facilitate consideration of the reports by the competent committees, it was decided that the FAO secretariat would add a simple cover page pointing out the recommendations on which the committees are expected to take specific action (on behalf of the FAO Council), versus other aspects, which may be only for information and noting. Eleven Joint Inspection Unit reports have been considered so far by FAO under the enhanced reporting system. The Unit believes that this reporting system, as an integral component of the overall follow-up system, will facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit.

18. Likewise, the secretariat of UNESCO prepared for the one hundred and sixty-ninth session of its Executive Board a report entitled "Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNESCO and implementation of recommendations of previous reports".[6] The annex to that document presents information in tabular form on measures that have been taken to implement the recommendations included in 10 reports and 2 notes of the Unit.

19. It should also be noted that during 2003, agreement was reached with the secretariat of ITU on the handling and follow-up of the Unit's reports, and that endorsement of the agreement by the organization's Council is expected in 2004. The Unit also reached agreement with the secretariat of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on this matter, and it is being implemented as a pilot scheme. Negotiations continue with the International Maritime Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency on the adoption of the follow-up system.

20. The progress made in this area, which the Unit hopes will be emulated by other organizations, reflects the benefits of constant dialogue between secretariats and the

Unit, and of the latter's increasing use of consultations that are based on a problem-solving approach and in which full participation of the secretariats ensures ownership of the problem and the solution.

B. Potential impact of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations — selected examples

21. Some selected examples of recommendations approved by various legislative organs of the participating organizations in 2003 and their impact are described below.

United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

22. During 2003, the Joint Inspection Unit report on support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2002/3) was considered by the competent legislative bodies of most United Nations organizations, as well as by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), where it attracted special interest given the high priority attached to this subject by the United Nations system organizations. CEB decided to use it as the basis for its action on harmonizing policies with regard to support costs.[7] The implementation of the report's recommendations is expected to contribute to the efforts being undertaken by the United Nations system organizations to improve resource allocation and programme planning and ensure transparency and sound financial management.[8]

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

23. The Unit's report on the review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (JIU/REP/2002/8) was considered by the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee of FAO in its sessions of May and September 2003. The secretariat of FAO was requested by those Committees to provide a detailed time-bound action plan, indicating actions that would be undertaken to implement the recommendations of the report. The response was formulated by the secretariat in a document issued in September 2003[9] and was complemented by another report entitled "Progress report on human resources issues",[10] which also referred to recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. These documents point out that several recommendations, in the areas of programming and budgeting, delegation of authority, management information systems and decentralization of human resources management, have been or are in the process of being implemented. Implementation of the recommendations will facilitate the application of the policies adopted by the Organization's governing bodies of FAO, increase efficiencies and allow for greater harmonization with managerial practices in other organizations of the United Nations system. The External Auditor of FAO has indicated that he will pursue an audit of selected areas of human resources management, based on the findings of the Joint Inspection Unit review.

World Health Organization

24. Another example of a positive impact of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations is the decision of the WHO Executive Board in 2003 to review the

mandate, operation and structure of its three oversight Committees (Administration, Budget and Finance Committee, Programme Development Committee and Audit Committee), as well as the possibility of merging two or more of these standing Committees, as recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report entitled "Enhancing governance oversight role: structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports" (JIU/REP/2001/4).

International Telecommunication Union

25. The ITU legislative organ discussed in 2003 the report JIU/REP/2001/3, "Review of administration and management in the International Telecommunication Union". The impact that the report has had, and continues to have, over a broad range of managerial and administrative issues, is unmistakable. This is particularly reflected in the discussions of the ITU Group of Specialists. There, as reported in document C03/32-Rev.1, issues such as decentralization, duplication and the managerial structure of the Union were debated on the basis of the Unit's report.

World Intellectual Property Organization

26. The WIPO legislative organ discussed the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Managing information in the United Nations system organizations: management information systems" (JIU/REP/2002/9). It was noted that the secretariat of WIPO was already implementing three of the recommendations included in the report. With regard to the recommendation advocating the preparation of a comprehensive strategy for information management systems, it was stated that progress had been made by extending the Administration Integrated Management System project to include areas such as procurement, travel management, human resources management and payroll. As for the recommendation on the designation of a Chief Information Officer, it was indicated that one had already been appointed with responsibilities similar to those set out in the Joint Inspection Unit report. Concerning the recommendation outlining the preconditions required to develop a new management information system, it was noted that these preconditions had been taken into account in the design of the new management information system of WIPO. Information on these points can be found in document WO/GA/30/8.

Chapter IV
Relationship with other oversight bodies

27. During the period under review, the Joint Inspection Unit pursued its efforts to increase cooperation with other oversight bodies and systematically sought contacts with their representatives.

28. In November 2003, the Unit hosted the sixth United Nations tripartite oversight coordination meeting (involving the Board of Auditors, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Joint Inspection Unit). The meeting was particularly productive, as all participants agreed that coordination among United Nations oversight bodies must become an integral part of their strategy and a directing principle of oversight activities. They also concurred that coordination must take concrete form, going beyond the organization of a yearly meeting, and several proposals were adopted in this regard.

29. These proposals include a review of the feasibility of developing a consolidated database of ongoing and projected reviews and audits, the exchange of information on a number of specific areas currently under examination by two or more oversight bodies and efforts to develop a common format for tracking and monitoring the implementation of oversight recommendations. All are aimed at avoiding duplication, increasing synergies and enhancing the overall impact of oversight activities. It was also agreed that more regular communications at the working and principal levels would ensure the implementation of decisions taken at the annual meetings.

30. Since the meeting, the Unit has had frequent contacts, in the form of face-to-face meetings and correspondence, with the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services and has discussed with them, among other topics, annual work plans and the possible sharing of training opportunities.

Notes

[1] See A/58/343.

[2] See A/58/343/Add.1.

[3] JIU/REP/2002/11.

[4] See resolution 2002/80, fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

[5] EB113/26.

[6] 169 EX/33.

[7] See A/57/442/Add.1, 4 February 2003.

[8] See, for example, WHO EB113/26, 4 December 2003.

[9] PC/90/6 b) and FC 104/INF/20 a).

[10] FC 104/15.

Annex I

Composition of the Joint Inspection Unit

1. The composition of the 21 Unit for the year 2003 is set out below. Each member's term of office expires (or expired) on 31 December of the year indicated in parentheses.

Armando Duque González (Colombia), Chairman (2003)

Ion Gorita (Romania), Vice-Chairman (2005)

Doris Bertrand (Austria) (2005)

Even Fontaine Ortiz (Cuba) (2007)

Sumihiro Kuyama (Japan) (2004)

Wolfgang Münch (Germany) (2005)

Louis-Dominique Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) (2005)

Tang Guangting (China) (2007)

Victor Vislykh (Russian Federation) (2007)

M. Deborah Wynes (United States of America) (2007)

Muhammad Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania) (2007)

2. At its 88th plenary meeting, on 6 June 2003, the General Assembly appointed Christopher Thomas (Trinidad and Tobago) for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2004 and expiring on 31 December 2008.

3. In accordance with article 18 of its statute, which provides that the Unit shall elect each year from among the Inspectors a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, the Unit elected Ion Gorita (Romania) Chairman and M. Deborah Wynes (United States of America) Vice-Chairperson for the calendar year 2004.

Annex II

Staffing and budget

Staffing

1. The overall composition of the secretariat that assists the Joint Inspection Unit, consisting of 19 staff members, has not changed during the last three bienniums, although there have been adjustments to the distribution of these posts over the years. During the period under consideration (2003), the posts were as follows: 1 D-2 (Executive Secretary), 2 P-5 (senior research officers), 3 P-4 (research officers), 3 P-3 (two research officers and one information technology officer) and 10 General Service staff, including 6 research assistants.

Budget

2. The total appropriation for the Joint Inspection Unit for the biennium 2002-2003 was $7,546,100, which represented zero real growth over the previous biennium.

Annex III

List of participating organizations

In accordance with its statute, the Joint Inspection Unit performs its functions with respect to the United Nations, including its programmes, funds and offices,[a] and with respect to the following organizations, which have accepted its statute in accordance with its provisions:

International Labour Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

International Civil Aviation Organization

World Health Organization

Universal Postal Union

International Telecommunication Union

World Meteorological Organization

International Maritime Organization

World Intellectual Property Organization

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

World Tourism Organization[b]

International Atomic Energy Agency

Notes

[a] The United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Food Programme (which is also a subsidiary body of FAO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

[b] Effective 23 December 2003.

Annex IV

Percentage shares of participating organizations in the costs of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2002-2003 (final)[a]

United Nations[b]	31.7
World Food Programme	10.0
United Nations Development Programme	14.8
United Nations Population Fund	2.6
United Nations Office for Project Services	0.5
United Nations Children's Fund	9.6
International Labour Organization	3.4
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	5.8
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	4.4
International Civil Aviation Organization	1.1
World Health Organization	7.8
Universal Postal Union	0.3
International Telecommunication Union	1.3
World Meteorological Organization	0.6
International Maritime Organization	0.4
World Intellectual Property Organization	1.2
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	1.5
International Atomic Energy Agency	3.0

Notes

[a] *Source*: United Nations Office of Programme Planning Budget and Accounts Programme Planning and Budget Division. As per article 20.2 of the Joint Inspection Unit statute, the "expenditures of the Unit shall be shared by the participating organizations as agreed by them". Accordingly, the cost-sharing arrangement is decided upon by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the basis of an agreed formula approved by its High Level Committee on Management.

[b] United Nations includes the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

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